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EXAMINER

LE, HUYEN D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3751

DATE MAILED: 06/14/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| Office Action Summary | Application No. 09/691,944 | Applicant(s) JEAN-LOUIS GUERET |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Examiner | Art Unit |
| | Huyen Le | 3751 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _____ MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 March 2002 .

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-84 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-3, 7-12, 29-32, 38-43, 45, 48, 49, 52, 55, 59-65, 67-79, 81 and 84 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 13 and 80 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims withdrawn from consideration are 4-6,14-28,33-37,44,46,47,50,51,53,54,56-58,66,82 and 83.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-3, 7-12, 29, 30, 32, 41-43, 48, 49, 52, 59-65, 70-79, 81 and 84 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Capezzuto (3,132,370).

The Capezzuto reference discloses an applicator comprising a reservoir 10, a removable closure 20, an applicator member 36 having a product application surface movable between a first position wherein it extends out of the reservoir (Fig. 3) and a second position wherein it is substantially contained in the reservoir (Fig. 2), and an elastically compressible support 34 supporting the applicator member 36 and the support 34 having a compressibility greater than the compressibility of the applicator member 36.

Regarding claims 7-10, the support 34 includes a block of foam (col. 2, lines 59-60).

Regarding claims 11 and 12, the applicator member 36 is attached to the support 34 by crimping by flange 28.

Regarding claims 29 and 30, the product application surface of the applicator member 36 has a convex profile or a dome (Fig. 3).

Regarding claim 32, the applicator member 36 includes a perforated element (col. 2, lines 65-66).

Regarding claims 41-43, the reservoir includes a compressible body which is a deformable tube (col. 2, line 16).

Regarding claims 59-62, all functional statements of the intended use have been carefully considered but deemed not to impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the applicator device of Capezzuto which is capable of being used to apply any kind of cosmetic products, glue, correction fluid, and a stain remover.

Regarding claim 63, the method of applying a cosmetic product is inherently performed during normal operation of the applicator.

Regarding claim 64, the applicator device comprises an absorbent member having a first portion 36 configured to apply a liquid product to a surface and a second support portion 34 configured to elastically support the first portion 36, wherein the first portion 36 has a different density than the second portion (because of material differences).

Regarding claim 81, the applicator member 36 includes a recessed portion which is an area located under the lower surface of the applicator member as shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

3. Claims 1-3, 29-32, 41-43, 48, 49, 59-63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schwartzman (3,266,079).

The Schwartzman reference discloses an applicator comprising a reservoir 10, a removable closure 76, an applicator member 23 having a product application surface

movable between a first position wherein it extends out of the reservoir (Fig. 4) and a second position wherein it is substantially contained in the reservoir (Figs. 3 and 5), the applicator member including one block of an absorbent material, and an elastically compressible support 32 supporting the applicator member 23 and the support 32 having a compressibility greater than the compressibility of the applicator member 23.

Regarding claim 3, the applicator member 23 has a compressibility such that the block becomes compressed during application of the product (Fig. 5).

Regarding claims 28 and 30, the product application surface has a convex profile or a dome shape (Fig. 4).

Regarding claims 31, 32, 48 and 49, the applicator member 23 is formed from a block of open-cell foam (col. 2, lines 31-32).

Regarding claims 41-43, the reservoir 12 is made of a plastic material which is inherently compressible or deformable.

Regarding claims 59 and 60, the reservoir contains a cosmetic product (col. 1, lines 60-63).

Regarding claims 61 and 62, all functional statements of the intended use have been carefully considered but deemed not to impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the applicator device of Schwartzman which is capable of being used to apply any kind of fluid such as glue, correction fluid, or a stain remover.

Regarding claim 63, the method of applying a cosmetic product is inherently performed during normal operation of the applicator.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 38-40 and 67-69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Capezzuto (3,132,370).

The Capezzuto reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Capezzuto reference is not specific as to what sizes the open cells of the foam support 34 should be, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a size for open cells of the foam support within a certain range to best fit a particular applicator depending on a liquid applied and to optimize the performance of the applicator. See *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233, using the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

6. Claim 55 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Capezzuto (3,132,370).

The Capezzuto reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Capezzuto reference is not specific that the compressibility of the support 34 is two to four times greater than the compressibility of the applicator member 36, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a support having a certain compressibility range to best fit a particular applicator design and to optimize the performance of the applicator. See *In re*

Aller, 105 USPQ 233, using the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

7. Claim 45 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Capezzuto (3,132,370) in view of McCabe et al (2,659,919).

The Capezzuto reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Capezzuto applicator device does not include a diaphragm portion on the reservoir 10, attention is directed to the McCabe et al reference which discloses another applicator device comprising a reservoir 12 having a diaphragm portion 14a for facilitating delivering the liquid 12 to an applicator member 17.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a reservoir with a diaphragm in the Capezzuto applicator device in view of the teaching of the McCabe et al reference in order to facilitating delivering the fluid to the applicator member.

8. Claims 38-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartzman (3,266,079).

The Schwartzman reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Schwartzman reference is not specific as to what sizes the open cells of the foam support 34 should be, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a size for open cells of the foam support within a certain range to best fit a particular applicator depending on a liquid applied and to optimize the performance of the applicator. See In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233, using the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

9. Claim 55 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartzman (3,266,079).

The Schwartzman reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Schwartzman reference is not specific that the compressibility of the support 34 is two to four times greater than the compressibility of the applicator member 36, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a support having a certain compressibility range to best fit a particular applicator design and to optimize the performance of the applicator. See *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233, using the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

10. Claim 45 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartzman (3,266,079) in view of McCabe et al (2,659,919).

The Schwartzman reference discloses an applicator device as described above.

Although the Schwartzman applicator device does not include a diaphragm portion on the reservoir 10, attention is directed to the McCabe et al reference which discloses another applicator device comprising a reservoir 12 having a diaphragm portion 14a for facilitating delivering the liquid 12 to an applicator member 17.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a reservoir with a diaphragm in the Schwartzman applicator device in view of the teaching of the McCabe et al reference in order to facilitating delivering the fluid to the applicator member.

Allowable Subject Matter

11. Claims 13 and 80 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The Gueret '781 reference discloses an applicator (Fig. 5) comprising a reservoir 2, an applicator member 12, and a support member 12' made of a foam material. The Schwartzman '468 and 452', Nadai, Oliver, and Barlow et al references disclose applicators comprising applicator members and supports made of a foam material. The Schultz reference discloses an applicator (Fig. 2) having an applicator 52 and a support 53 made of foam. The Miles reference discloses an applicator having a support 35 made of foam. The Langnickel reference shows an ink applicator having an applicator 21 and a number of support rings 51,52,53 made of a foam material.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Huyen Le whose telephone number is 703-306-5504. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gregory Huson can be reached on 703-308-2580. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-7766 for regular communications and 703-308-7766 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0861.

HL
June 10, 2002



6-11-02

GREGORY HUSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700